

# RAMBANK RAMBANK RAMBANK



Red Rose Atari Members Newsletter

**VOLUME 4~**

**1987**

RED ROSE ATARI MEMBERS (R.A.M.) is an organization of ATARI computer enthusiasts. The General meeting is held on the second TUESDAY of the month at MILLERSVILLE STUDENT ACTIVITY building at 7:00 P.M. Any and all articles in this newsletter may be reprinted so long as formal credit is given to the original source.

The club Board meetings will be held on the fourth TUESDAY of the month at 7:30.

## 1987 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:  
Rick Maynard  
Ph.529-6764

VICE PRESIDENT:  
DAVE STROUP  
Ph.426-3346

SECRETARY:  
GARY MORGAN  
Ph.272-7701

TREASURER:  
Jennie Rodriguez  
Ph.299-1502

### PLEASE NOTE!!

All club oriented mail should be addressed to: R.A.M.

c/o Editor or whom ever  
P.O. Box 7532  
Lancaster, PA 17604

"It is the policy of this organization that software pirating and theft of intellectual property is incompatible with the goals of R.A.M. Any member found pirating software at organizational events will be expelled." (Re: R.A.M. Constitution.)

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings everyone. This month's column will be my last with RAM and I'll keep it short. I've recently changed jobs and by the time you read this I will be living up in New York state.

I've enjoyed my tenure as President of RAM for the last year and a half. My time was made enjoyable by the friendship and support I received from various club members. Walt Robinson has agreed to take over my functions until the December elections can select a new President. Please give him and the rest of the board officers as much of your support as possible, particularly with regard to the upcoming Park City show. Thanks once again and farewell.

Rick Maynard



## SHORT NOTES

Jim Stokes

Welcome to another month of Short Notes, before we get started I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rick Maynard publically for all his efforts on behalf of the club. Rick has started a new job and will be moving from the area, as a result he has resigned as president of R. A. M. effective July 28. On behalf of all the people in the club, THANKS RICK for all you've done for us. Walt Robinson will be filling in as president until December when we hold our annual elections.

There is a new player in the Atari software game locally, its DALLEE ELECTRONICS. They are located in the Willow Valley Square, south of Lancaster (near Willow Street) on route 272 just before it splits into twin highways. I was down last week and they had a very interesting selection of ST software including the 3D glasses from Antic along with the Cybermate software, Computer Eyes, GFA Basic, Cad 3D, Publishing Partner and much more. There 8 bit selection is a little skimpy but that will change as he becomes more familiar with 8 bit software. DALLEE is an authorized Atari Service Center so its the place to go with your hardware problems or to get the blitter installed but they don't intend to do 1 meg upgrades at this time. The phone number is 464-2519.

Rumors keep circulating that Analog Magazine is in trouble, it has been much discussed on CIS and Genie (there hasn't been a word about it on Delphi's Atari Sig which is sponsored by Analog) but the people from Analog emphatically deny it. As a regular user of the Analog sig on Delphi I haven't seen any evidence of financial problems or any other difficulties.

There hasn't been much new information for the 8 bit Atari's, the 80 column card still hasn't made an appearance. The new 8 bit drive is expected to show up soon since Atari had depleted it's stock of 1050's a few months back. The SX 212 Modem has not shown up but I've heard that in order to direct connect to an 8 bit you'll need another package from Atari. It will include an SIO cable and SX Express, a terminal program by Keith Ledbetter. The 8 bit package will be available as soon as the modems are finished, you won't need the package if you intend to connect the modem to an 850 or PR: Connection.

Atari has been talking with industry experts about the possibility of including Post Script (the most commonly used page description language) with it's laser printer. It isn't thought likely that Atari will go this route since its use requires an upfront payment to Adobe (developers of Post Script) of \$150,000 as well as 7% of sales. When Atari announced its laser printer it was considerably cheaper than the rest of the competition, prices on other printers have dropped since that time. Atari could use a laser printer with Post Script to regain its competitive edge even if it had to raise the price a little. None of the low end laser printers include Post Script because of its expense but Star Micronics has announced a new laser printer for \$2499 that will include Post Script and 1 meg of memory.

The first titles in the Arrakis Advantage series of educational programs (for middle school) are available, there will be 17 in all, the first 4 have been released with the rest in various stages of development.



Microsoft Write is nearly finished, there are only two pesky bugs remaining to be eliminated.

Atari was the first computer manufacturer ever to exhibit at NAMM, the National Association of Music Merchants, as a result Atari was able to sign up hundreds of music stores as Atari dealers. Because of its built in MIDI interface, the ST is becoming the machine of choice for musicians.

A new utility for the ST will allow you to install any Degas compatible picture as the new background for your desktop, the product is Easel/ST and will sell for \$19.95.

A new product for the 8 bit is Light Speed C, a C compiler that is a subset of the Kernigan and Ritchie standard. It is available for \$39.95 from Clearstar Softechnologies.

For those of us with STs, Atari has made a decision on how the blitter chip will be retrofitted, it will be piggy backed on the 68000. In addition to the blitter you will receive some new ROM chips. According to Dallas Gutacker at DALLIE ELECTRONICS only some of the ROM chips will be replaced, the rest will be upgraded later this year.

Sales of Atari computers have been down 40% in the second quarter, there has been no reason given for the drop in sales but Atari has been dropping distributors trying to correct the situation. There has been some speculation that sales had dropped because people have been waiting for the appearance of the Megas.

The Megas are expected to begin appearing in August, the European version appeared with the blitter installed so the same is expected for the US version. There had been some speculation that they would be blitterless because of the production problems associated with the chip.

Diverse Data, which makes drives for the ST, plans to make a Mega case for the older 520s, installation involves removing the mother board and installing it in the new case. Also included is a detached keyboard the plugs into the case via a telephone jack. Diverse Data is also going to produce a double sided, 3.5 inch drive that stores 2 megabytes (unformatted) of data.

Word Perfect, one of the premier word processors for the IBM PC should be available in an ST version by September.

There has been more talk of the EST, which stands for Extended ST. According to Current Notes, Len Tramiel is expected to announce that the new machine will be available by Christmas. The monochrome version will have a resolution of 1280 by 960 and the color version will have 640 by 420 with 4096 colors.

Happy Computers, makers of the disk back-up hardware for the 8 bit computers, will produce an interface for that ST that will allow you to use 3.5, 5.25 or 8 inch drives. In addition they will format in Mac, IBM and other formats and, of course, it will back up protected ST software.

Atari has recently floated a bond issue to acquire a chip manufacturing facility, memory chips have gone up in price recently and so they are looking to purchase a chip manufacturing company in order to insure a good supply of cheap chips. In addition they are also expected to construct new manufacturing facilities in northern California, as of now all manufacturing is done in Taiwan but Tramiel believes that a U.S. facility, using robots, can be just as efficient.

## ST Public Domain Games, Part II

or

The More, the Merrier!

Only four short months ago I presented my five favorite ST Public Domain games, and outlined most of the others in the ST library. Well since then, there's been a lot of game-writing going on, and a whole new crop of PD games have sprouted up and made their way into the ST Library (thanks to Jim Stokes). So it seems about time to update my list of favorites. April's list went like this:

- 1) Hack
- 2) Monopoly
- 3) Celestial Ceasers
- 4) Megaroids
- 5) Football

Let's see how the newer games stacked up by looking at the all-new, revised, sensational Top Five list:

### 1) Hack

Yep, it's still tops. Since April, I've managed to reach some of the lowest depths of Hack's dungeon, and I can say with fervor that I was dead wrong. There aren't 23 levels, as I stated in April, but at least 25!! Imagine my surprise, roaming around on what I thought was the lowest level of the dungeon, the one where the much-sought-after Amulet of Yendor was hidden, and finding stairs leading downward!! It was a shock, to say the least. Then I read back over the game's documentation files and discovered that the Amulet is supposed to be on level 20! I still haven't found the Amulet yet, but there ARE lots of unicorns on level 20 that I can't figure out what to do with...and I DID manage to kill a long worm (a huge beastie with at least 15 sections, each of which gets a separate attack when the worm runs into you) and recover one of his teeth, which allegedly can be manufactured into a crysknife (the most effective weapon in Hack)...I'll keep you posted.

### 2) Wheel of Fortune

Yes folks, Monopoly has been unseated as the number two game. Wheel of Fortune's ability to handle up to three computer players is what beat out old Monopoly. This game has everything but Vanna White!! A high score list and two puzzle files, with 104 non-repeating puzzles each, accompany the game. PLUS, specialty puzzle files like music, movies, etc. are on the way. Players spin the big wheel, buy vowels, use up free spins, and shout "BIG MONEY!! BIG MONEY!!" just like on T.V.! I can say from experience that it's a lot of fun. Give it a try and I know you'll agree.

### 3) TIE--Monopoly and Stoneage Deluxe

Monopoly's still good for single game-players sitting at home alone, and the graphics are great. Stoneage Deluxe is a 'Mr. Do' (arcade game), or 'Dig Dug' (ditto) look-alike that has something pretty unique to PD games--a complete game editor to create your own "worlds" to play. In Stoneage, you move your little character Willi around a screen populated by dirt, brick walls, boulders, and cabbages. The dirt is movement area, the brick walls block your way, the boulders fall on you if you walk under them, and you must collect all the cabbages on a level to proceed to the next. There are two worlds included in the STONEDLX.ARC file, plus

5



another from a BBS and one I created based on Pink Floyd albums. Check out Stoneage Deluxe if you want a nice, distracting game that lets you use some creativity, too.

#### 4) Plutos

Plutos is a Space Invaders-type game with super graphics and up to two players. There's no .DOC file with it, though, so let me explain some things I've discovered about it...it has a quirk, in that it won't run when there's a strange palette or icons loaded, so reboot to the old, familiar lo-res green and white desktop. When the game loads, it displays a colorful (but meaningless) control panel and instructs you to press "1" for a one-player game or "2" for two players. Player one's ship is controlled by a joystick in Port 1 (the non-mouse port) and player two uses a joystick in the mouse port. The game takes place on a beautifully drawn space platform that your ship flies over. You steer around obstacles (the only things that can hurt you are towers with pulsing red squares on top--you lose a ship if you touch the square), firing at both air and ground targets. Colorful air targets include green and yellow monsters, spinning discs, and floating eyes. Ground targets include rocket bases, fuel tanks (shooting these replenishes some of your fuel), and "500" bonus squares (worth 500 points). You begin with four ships, and can only gain more by shooting green squares with question marks on them. They take about six shots to kill, but if a smiling face appears in their place, you get an extra ship. At the end of the first stage, two floating eyes will approach, shooting bombs at you. Kill them to reach stage two. However, stage two is identical to stage one. With multiple levels, this game would move up to at least third on my list.

#### 5) Celestial Ceasers

I don't play it much anymore, but it's a good strategy game with a lot to offer. Besides, it's a nice change from space shoot-em-ups.

That's it for the top five, but here's some more new games that are worth a look...

Megaroids-- Still the best-looking Asteroids game I've ever seen (including Atari's original arcade game), Megaroids has about six levels that increase dramatically in difficulty. It's also a great example of what can be accomplished with Megamax C.

Spacewar--For two players, one is the Enterprise, the other the Klingon ship. Many options to control gravity, length of the game, etc. Controls are from the keyboard: Enterprise player uses the letter keys, Klingon the numeric keypad.

(Editor's note, Spacewar was one of the first computer games ever written, it was done by Slug Russell and others in 1961 on a PDP-1 at MIT.)

Joust--Atari's PD release of it's \$25.00 program. Identical to the saleable version except that it doesn't keep score. It's fun to play, anyway.

Daleks-- For 'Dr. Who' fans. A strategy game that places you (as the Doctor) in a field surrounded by Daleks. As anyone who watches the show (Saturdays at 4 on PBS) knows, the Daleks are a race of evil robots built by a madman named Davros (his picture is included in the ARCD file with Daleks). The Daleks have sensors that keep track of where you are, but they can't sense where other Daleks are. The object is to move around, causing the Daleks to run into each other as they move toward you. It gets tough pretty quickly, and it's good for a change of pace. You can find DALEKS.PRG and DALEKS.RSC in the file DR\_WHO.ARC, which contains (besides the game) several Dr. Who related picture files.

ST Invaders--Yes, that classic of classics has arrived (but with a twist)!! One or two players can take on hordes of circling, spinning, bomb-dropping invaders in this shoot-em-up. It's different from the original Space Invaders in two ways: it's lack of "shields" (stationary or moving objects that absorb alien shots) and in it's pleasantly varied array of invaders. Instead of endlessly repeating rows of indistinguishable blips, there are colorful crabs, birds, faces, widgets, and more spinning in varied and complex patterns. And they drop a lot more bombs than their pitiful Atari 2600 counterparts.

Time Bandit-- A MichTron pre-release of the incredible arcade game, this gives you a feel of how the saleable one plays. This has a lot less worlds with only a few levels apiece, but it has those same mind-blowing Time Bandit graphics and is easier to finish than it's big brother.

By Eric Fulmer NEXT MONTH: Folks, 'Guild of Thieves' is ON THE SHELVES at Games 'N' Gadgets, so maybe I'll finally be able to review it. If not, I'll just surprise you...



P. O. Box 7532, Lancaster, PA 17604



S.L.C.C.  
NEWS LETTER EXCHG.  
P.O. BOX 1506  
SAN LEANDRO, CA 94577-0374

POSTMAN: if undeliverable, please return to sender.

